AT A MEETING OF THE

SUB-COMMITTEE of the CATHOLICS of IRELAND,

EDWARD BYRNE, Esq. in the Chair,

RESOLVED—That the following Letter be circulated.

SIR,

THIS Letter, with the Plan which accompanies it, is transmitted to You, by order of the Sub-committee. You will perceive that the object of this Plan is to procure a fuller attendance of Country gentlemen, to assist by their advice and influence, the measures adopted by the Committee to procure for the Catholics the ELECTIVE FRANCHISE, and an equal participation in the benefits of the TRIAL BY JURY. You will please to lose no time in submitting this to the respectable Catholics of your county: You will please also to inform them, that several respectable independent country gentlemen, lately in Dublin, had frequent consultations, for the laudable purpose of re-uniting to the Committee Lord Fingal, and the other gentlemen who had withdrawn themselves from it. These country gentlemen had the satisfaction to find, that the General Committee on one side, and the gentlemen who had entered into separate addresses on the other, mutually regretted their division; which they saw was used by the opponents of the Catholics, as a pretext for witholding from our people the Elective Franchise, and an equal participation of the benefits of the Trial by Jury. It is on all sides agreed, that if the Catholics are ALL united in this just and reasonable request, essential to the very existence of our people—there will be a certainty of success. It depends then on ourselves, whether we shall be freemen—or slaves! We say, essential to the very existence of our people; for, as the rage for electioneering interests increases, our wealthy farmers must either pay beyond the value for lands, or resign them to Protestant freeholders when out of lease; our poorer yeomanry will of course be expelled, and driven into beggary. Let us all then, speak with one voice, and supplicate the legislature for justice—and we shall receive it.

These independent country gentlemen have received from Lord Fingal, and the gentlemen who have acted with him, the most positive declarations—that they will never again enter into any act to oppose the General Committee in their endeavours to obtain the emancipation of the Catholics; and it is determined—that all former differences in opinion shall be buried in oblivion on both sides.

The Committee had decided to send some of their body, to propose to the counties, to appoint Delegates to the Committee, of whose attendance there would be a certainty; and our Chairman had actually left Dublin, with intention to go through great part of Ireland for this purpose; the independent country gentlemen, as before mentioned, took up the same idea themselves, (before they knew the Committee had determined upon it) and they, and Lord Fingal and his friends, all agreed in pressing such a measure on the Committee, as an additional means of re-uniting them to the body.

Lord Fingal, his friends, and the country gentlemen before mentioned, seemed at first inclined, that the present Committee should be dissolved; an opinion, however, which further reflection on the various difficulties resulting from such a measure, the doubts entertained of the competency in the Committee to dissolve itself, and the consideration that a dissolution must necessarily occur early in 1793, induced them to forego.

The plan inclosed, sanctioned by the General Committee, by these independent gentlemen, and by Lord Fingal and his friends, is recommended to your zeal to have carried into immediate execution in your county.

Signed by order,

RICHARD M'CORMICK,
SECRETARY.

On the Manner of conducting the Election of Delegates.

IT will be of great importance, in the preſent ſtate of our affairs, that the Delegates be choſen in ſuch a manner as to make it appear evident that the nomination of ſuch Delegates is authoriſed by *all the People*. But as it might be imprudent to call a meeting of all the Catholics of a county, for the purpoſe of proceeding to ſuch an election, it is therefore ſuggeſted—that one or two of the moſt reſpectable perſons in each pariſh be appointed electors, at a meeting to be held at ſuch *private houſe* in the pariſh, as may be moſt convenient to the inhabitants. Theſe ſeveral electors, ſo appointed, may meet at any central place, for the purpoſe of chooſing from one to four (as it may appear moſt expedient to them) of their own reſidents, as Delegates to the General Committee; no one to be eligible who ſhall not ſolemnly promiſe to attend his duty in Dublin, when required to do ſo by order of the Committee, or at leaſt who ſhall not pledge himſelf to attend in his turn. It is alſo ſuggeſted that, in addition to the RESIDENT Delegates, each county do appoint at the ſame time, as aſſociate Delegates for ſuch county, one or two (as it may appear beſt to the electors) RESIDENT inhabitants of Dublin, whoſe buſineſs it ſhall be, to keep up a regular correſpondence with their colleagues in the country, and to inform the county through them, of all proceedings in the General Committee, at ſuch times as the county Delegates ſhall be abſent. It is to be underſtood that attendance on the part of the county Delegates will not be required, except on important occaſions. In this, however, they are to ſtudy their own convenience; if they all come often, we are perſuaded that the Committee will derive ſatisfaction and profit from their preſence and advice.

As ſoon as the gentlemen of your county ſhall have appointed Delegates, it will be neceſſary to call THEIR attention to the firſt great buſineſs which ſhall probably engage the General Committee, viz. An humble application to our Gracious Sovereign, ſubmitting to him our loyalty and attachment, our obedience to the laws, a true ſtatement of our ſituation, and of the laws which operate againſt us; and humbly beſeeching—that we may be reſtored the ELECTIVE FRANCHISE, and an equal participation in the benefits of the TRIAL BY JURY. We have the FIRST AUTHORITY for aſſerting that this application will have infinite weight with our Gracious Sovereign and with Parliament, if our friends are qualified to declare, that it is the univerſal wiſh of EVERY Catholic in the Nation. To enable therefore your Delegates and the General Committee to ſucceed in your behalf, it will be neceſſary that the Meeting enter into Reſolutions in any words they chooſe to the following effect:

At a meeting of the Catholics of the County of *regularly convened,*
this *Day of* 179[illegible],
in the Chair,
RESOLVED That *of this County, and*
of the City of Dublin, have been this Day choſen by the Catholics of this County as their Delegates to the General Committee.

RESOLVED—That it is our inſtruction to our ſaid Delegates, to ſupport in ſaid Committee, as the voice of all the Catholics of this county, that an humble repreſentation be made to our Gracious Sovereign and to Parliament, of the many ſevere laws which oppreſs his Majeſty's faithful ſubjects, the Catholics of Ireland, although no cauſe, founded in wiſdom or policy, is aſſigned for their continuance; imploring it, as eſſential to our protection, and to ſecure an impartial diſtribution of juſtice in our favour, that we be reſtored to the ELECTIVE FRANCHISE, and an equal participation in the benefits of the TRIAL BY JURY.

According to its preſent form of conſtitution, the General Committee is open not only to perſons delegated by others, but to every Roman Catholic of landed property in the kingdom. From this mixture of REPRESENTATIVE and PERSONAL aſſociation, inconveniencies which every one may remember, but which at preſent it is uſeleſs to dwell on, have ariſen. To guard againſt ſimilar inconveniencies in future, we have recommended to your conſideration the above ſketch of a new ſyſtem; the object of which is to give to the Committee ſomewhat more of a REPRESENTATIVE, and ſomewhat leſs of an INDIVIDUAL capacity; and we beg leave to offer to you the following obſervations in ſupport of our plan:—

Men appointed by others muſt hold themſelves accountable to thoſe from whom they derive their truſt; and therefore muſt regulate their conduct by the ſtandard of general opinion; or, if they be unwilling to take ſuch a ſtandard for their rule, and to obey the inſtructions of their conſtituents, they may be removed from the places they hold, to make room for others more practicable, and leſs inclined to ſet the dictates of private ſentiment, or private intereſt,

intereſt, in oppoſition to the general will, and the public good.——Under a ſyſtem which is thus REPRESENTATIVE, and where the truſt is revocable at pleaſure, SEDUCTION cannot be practiſed, nor can DIVISION again take place; or at leaſt the remedy is ſo near the evil, that little danger is to be apprehended from either.

Our Plan, by making attendance a duty, will, we apprehend, ſerve to bring a greater number of Country gentlemen into the Committee than have formerly appeared among us. While admiſſion remains ſo eaſy as it does at preſent, and while ſo many perſons are exempted from reſponſibility and controul, we have little reaſon to expect that country gentlemen will deſert their homes and their immediate concerns, to promote an intereſt which is remotely or obſcurely felt; but we hope that the honourable diſtinction of repreſenting others, added to the obligation of a ſolemn promiſe, will not fail to reconcile thoſe who ſhall happen to be delegated, to admit of ſome temporary hardſhips, in order to promote the public good. By collecting occaſionally a number of country gentlemen in Dublin, we flatter ourſelves, that the Committee will be enabled to ſpeak the ſentiments of its conſtituent members with diſtinctneſs and preciſion; and that the country parts of the kingdom will be provided with the ſureſt means of acquiring whatever information may be neceſſary on the ſubject of Catholic affairs. From this prompt communication of opinion and intelligence, we foreſee great advantages; advantages, which under the preſent ſyſtem are wholly beyond our reach; as the landed gentlemen are reſponſible only to themſelves, and as the Dublin Delegates have frequently little knowledge of their conſtituents. The attendance of a greater number of country gentlemen will juſtify ſuch a reduction of the number of Delegates for the metropolis in the General Committee, as may be judged adviſable; a meaſure which was always deſirable, but which could not be heretofore accompliſhed, as the attendance of landed gentlemen was ſo uncertain and irregular.

Every endeavour ſhould be uſed to cultivate and improve the friendſhip of our clergy. The clergy and laity, having but one intereſt, ſhould have but one mind, and ſhould therefore mutually combine their talents, their opinions and their exertions, in order to effectuate our common emancipation. This union of ſentiment and deſign, this interchange of counſel, and of aid, will ſerve to ſtrengthen the bonds of a common friendſhip, and will be the beſt ſecurity againſt innovation in matters which relate to religion.

The clergy, being the natural guardians of morality, will undoubtedly conſent to co-operate with the laity, when they conſider that the reſtoration of the Elective Franchiſe to the Catholic community will tend to prevent thoſe perjuries which are ſo common at, and which diſgrace the return of electioneering conteſts. By ſuch conduct will the clergy ſecure to themſelves that influence over the laity of their own perſuaſion, which it is uſeful that good clergy ſhould have; and that reſpectability among perſons of other perſuaſions, which muſt naturally reſult from the encreaſed importance of the people to whom they belong. It is unneceſſary to point out the advantages which a reſtoration of the Elective Franchiſe would produce in our habits and modes of life; in the ſtate of national as well as individual happineſs. Let it ſuffice to ſay, that not only laymen, but every Catholic biſhop and prieſt, would, by the acquiſition of ſo valuable a privilege to the Catholic body at large, find his condition meliorated in a variety of ſhapes and circumſtances, which cannot eaſily be reduced within the compaſs of exact calculation. The ſilent operation of this right would, in the lapſe of time, contribute to raiſe a reſpectable yeomanry in the kingdom; and this yeomanry, giving on the one hand a new infuſion of vigour to the commonwealth, would, on the other ſupply a fund, from which the clergy would derive the means of a more honourable ſupport, and more proportionate to their uncommon labours and merits, than at preſent they enjoy.

When this plan ſhall have been adopted, and the returns in conſequence made, the Committee will in the courſe of next Winter, conſider, as a meaſure of the laſt importance, what further improvements may be neceſſary in the mode of electing Delegates on future occaſions, in order to ſecure a permanent, extenſive, and effectual method of collecting the general ſenſe of the Catholics of Ireland.

☞ WE beg leave again to recommend it to you moſt earneſtly, to carry the above Plan into IMMEDIATE execution. It is of the utmoſt conſequence, that we ſhould have this addition of Country gentlemen as SOON as POSSIBLE, in order to give due weight and efficacy to our humble application to the Throne, which we are ADVISED to make this Summer, before the parliamentary arrangements are formed for the enſuing Winter.

As ſoon as your Delegates ſhall have been choſen, we requeſt that you will make a return of their names and addreſs to our Secretary, *Mr. Richard M'Cormick, Mark's-Alley, Dublin.*

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